

REMARKS

With this Amendment, Applicants cancel Claims 1, 5, 7-9, 11, and 12, add new Claims 14-18, and amend Claims 2, 6, 10, and 13. Therefore, Claims 2, 6, 10, and 13-18 are all the claims currently pending in the present application.

Claim Objections

Claim 7 stands objected to as dependent on a cancelled claim. Applicants cancel Claim 7.

Claim 8 stands objected to as a duplicate of Claim 6. Applicants cancel Claim 8.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2, 6, and 10 stand objected to as dependent on a rejected claim. However, the Examiner indicates that these claims would be allowable if rewritten into independent form. With this Amendment, Applicants amend Claim 2 into independent form, incorporating all the limitations of Claim 1, from which it previously depended. Claim 6 is dependent on Claim 2, and therefore has only been amended for purposes of clarity. Claim 10 has been amended to depend from new Claim 14. Claim 14 depends from Claim 2 or Claim 6.

Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 2, 6, and 10 are currently in proper form for allowance, and respectfully request that the Examiner's objections to these claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 5, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Onderkirk et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,825,543 ("Onderkirk"), in view of Nerad et al., U.S. Patent

No. 5,585,035 (“Nerad”), West et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,685,771 (“West”), Takeuchi et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,374,371 (“Takeuchi”), Kubota et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,365,239 (“Kubota”), and O’Callaghan et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,182,665 (“O’Callaghan”). Claims 9 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Onderkirk, in view of Nerad, West, Takeuchi, Kubota, O’Callaghan, and Omar et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,433,846 (“Omar”).

Without commenting on the substantive merits of the Examiner’s rejection, Applicants cancel Claims 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 12.

Claim 13, as amended, is dependent from any one of Claims 10, 15, 16, and 17. Applicants submit that Claim 13 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependence, and respectfully request that the Examiner’s rejection thereof be reconsidered and withdrawn.

New Claims 14-18

With this Amendment, Applicants add new Claims 14-18, in order more fully to cover various aspects of Applicants’ invention as disclosed in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F. R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 09/468,085

Q57340

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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